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The Long Island FISHERMAN

The Largest Weekly Sportfishing Magazine in the United States!

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About the Cover—

The Klondike VII approaches the Throgs Neck Bridge as she heads out for a day of winter action in New York Harbor. See William Herold's article on page 18 of this issue. Photo by William N. Herold.

COMING NEXT WEEK: **1980 RECORD ASSAULT**

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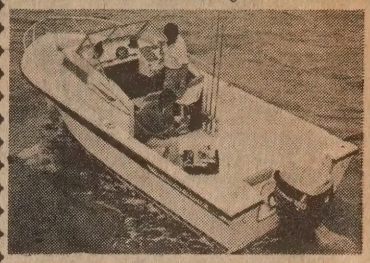

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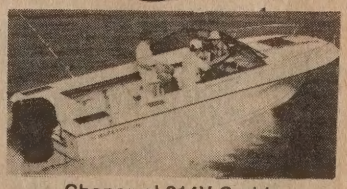

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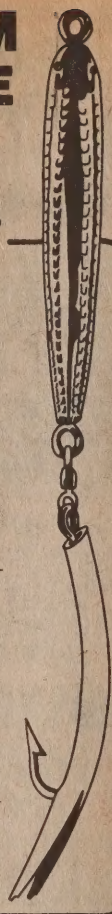

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Pass It On...

LIRR OFFERS SPECIAL PACKAGE TO BOAT SHOW

The Long Island Rail Road is offering boating enthusiasts a special reduced package ticket to the National Boat Show at the New York Coliseum. The package includes round trip rail fare and admission to the show. The exhibit will be held from Saturday, January 17 to Sunday, January 25.

The special package tickets are good from zones 2 through 11 and include the round trip fares plus a $5 admission ticket to the show. Youngsters 5-11 years of age are charged approximately one-half the adult price.

Some typical fares are, from zone 4 (Port Washington, Mineola) $6.70 for adults; zone 5/6 (Rockville Centre, Hicksville, Long Beach) $6.90; zone 7 (Oyster Bay, Massapequa Park) - $7.25; zone 8/9 (Huntington, Babylon) $7.70; zone 10 (Ronkonkoma, Sayville) $8.50; zone 11 (Port Jefferson, Patchogue) $8.75.

The tickets are good on any train arriving in Penn Station or Flatbush Avenue at 10AM or later. The return portion is good up to 1AM on the day following the date on the face of the ticket. Commutation ticket holders may purchase a discount ticket to the show at the Penn Station ticket office for $4. A valid commutation ticket must be shown to the ticket seller.

The Coliseum may be reached from Penn Station by Subway—IND A or AA train to 59th Street for 60 cents.

For further information on train schedules contact the LIRR's Travel Information Center: New York (212) 739-4200; Nassau (516) 742-4600; Suffolk (516) 273-4300.

DEC CREATING ACCESS FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Physically handicapped persons will find more and more of the Department of Environmental Conservation's facilities becoming accessible to them, Environmental Conservation Commissioner Robert F. Flacke said today.

"The Department has an ongoing program to incorporate handicapped accessibility in all new construction and remodeling existing facilities," Commissioner Flacke said. "Some campgrounds, fisheries research stations, offices and the three ski centers are now accessible in varying degrees," he said.

"Work on campgrounds has provided access for the handicapped to both camping and day-use areas with restrooms, central showers, special pads and tables to facilitate use by the handicapped," he said. Access passes for qualified individuals may be obtained from the Department which allows free use of its recreation facilities.

The now accessible Cape Vincent Fisheries Research Station sports a railed pier which allows access for fishing in the St. Lawrence River.

Most of the Department's regional offices and sub-offices are accessible to handicapped persons so that they may enjoy the services which EnCon's various programs offer.

Since work is ongoing and the status is constantly changing, it is suggested that persons needing up-to-date information on facility accessibility or the Access Pass call their regional DEC office.

NEW ABU-GARCIA FIELD TESTER NAMED

Mrs. Patty Ishkanian, Women's IGFA record holder, wife of Bob Ishkanian, president of Leslie Edelman Guns, has been named as an official Garcia Field Tester by Jim McIntosh of Garcia. Patty does her "hook 'n linin" both locally, down south and also internationally.

MONTAUK CAPTAINS' ASSOCIATION

The Montauk Captains' Association, now in its third year, has established itself as a positive force on the Montauk scene. Formed in 1978 and comprised of Charter fishing captains joined together for the good and welfare of Montauk sport fishing, the organization now numbers fifty strong.

At its annual dinner dance, the following officers were elected to serve for the 1981 term:

President: Bob Bozek
Vice Pres.: Joe McBride
Sec'y.: Jim Palumbo
Treasurer: Bill Bock
Trustees: G. Kieffer, A. Dacosta Faro

The M.C.A. has been active in virtually every aspect of the industry, ranging from electronic seminars and sportsmen shows to promoting the concept of "release flags" in lieu of needless overkill. They also can be counted on to voice their opinion in the political arena as regards to Montauk's best interests. Being the close-knit group that they are, the members continue to meet monthly even in the off-season. In addition to the camaraderie shared, this also affords the opportunity for tackle dealers and marine suppliers to make various presentations.

One of the major endeavors undertaken by the M.C.A. is its annual Charity Shark Tournament. The concept of a charity fishing tournament is an idea whose time has come, and the M.C.A. prides itself on being the pioneers in this area. The 1980 tournament netted $16,000 in cash and prizes benefitting both the charities involved and the entrants.

Another highlight of the season is the M.C.A. Annual Dinner Dance, this past year held in November at Brasby's Restaurant. It is an end of the season gathering where members and their guests dine and rehash all

those fishing battles, won or lost, throughout the year.

It is evident that the Montauk Captains' Association will remain a permanent fixture on the East End, pledging to constantly pursue the enhancement of their sport for Montauk, the fishing capitol of the world.

ATTENTION
Will Gil Bell please contact Fred at the L.I.F. office, 516-725-4200.

CLUB NEWS

SOUND SURF FISHING CLUB SEEKING NEW MEMBERS

The Sound Surf Fishing Club is now seeking new members. We are a Huntington-based club, fishing for stripers, blues and weakfish. It is the purpose and function of our club to: bring together those sharing a common interest in surf fishing; promote the exchange of knowledge, ideas and theories related to saltwater sport fish found in our area and the methods and means of taking them; and, last but not least, to develop good sportsmanship!

If you are interested, call Frank Meyer at 588-2672.

BOATING

SEA CAPTAINS WITH OVER 100 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE TO TEACH BOATING COURSE AGAIN

The Oceanside Flotilla of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is unique; two of its members have over 100 years of boating experience between them. One of these men, Captain Fred Jensen, went to sea in 1938 as a deck boy on the Clyde Mallory steamer, Seminole. Over the years he accumulated much knowledge and experience, studied diligently, and ultimately earned the Master Mariner's certificate from the Coast Guard. Today, he holds the seventh edition of his Master Mariner's license—a license which permits him to operate any size vessel, anywhere in the world.

The other Captain, George Barrett, first went to sea in 1920, as a deck boy on the sailing vessel Woodburn. This vessel carried cargo from Germany to Sweden, thence to Australia, and ended her voyage in England. Captain Barrett came to the United States in

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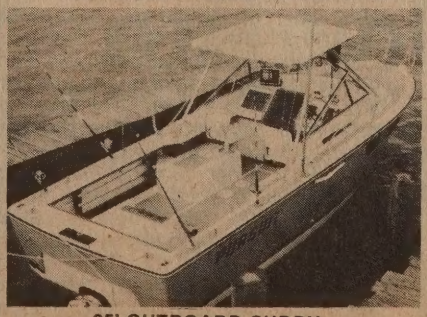

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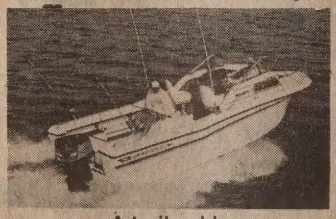

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1924, where one of his first jobs was as a pilot in New York harbor. He has held a license as a charter boat operator for over 30 years.

Both these men have volunteered to teach the Basic Boating & Seamanship course offered by the Coast Guard Auxiliary. The course includes Basic Knowledge of Aids to Navigation, Rules of the Road, Charts and Compass, Boating Laws, Marine Engines, Marlinspike Seamanship, Radiotelephone, Weather, plus Manuevering and Safe Boating Operations.

This free course will be held at the Oceanside Jr. High School on Merle Avenue, starting **February 3, 1981,** at 8PM. An added bonus for those completing this course will be a 5% discount on their Boat insurance policies afforded by most insurance companies.

Those wishing to attend these classes can register at the Oceanside Community Center on Foxhurst Road, or call Percy Paget, Commander, Flotilla 13-5 at 516-766-0968 or course coordinator, Tom Tormey at 516-764-5711.

SAFE BOATING COURSE

Boating accidents are on the rise on Long Island. Ten lives were lost last year. The Coast Guard Auxiliary is concerned. How do they combat this trend? They give Safe Boating Courses free, to educate the boating public.

TWO SEPARATE COURSES: 1. A fourteen lesson course in Boating Skills and Seamanship. Rules of the Road, Charting, Weather, Motorboat Handling, and Safety Requirements will be taught. 2. An eleven lesson Sailing Course. Learn Sailboat Handling, Charting, Rules of the Road, and much more.

Registration for both courses will be on Monday, February 2, 1981 at 8PM at the Stony Brook Yacht Club, Stony Brook, NY. Classes will be held each Monday thereafter at 8PM at the Stony Brook Yacht Club.

There is a nominal cost for class materials. Certificates are given upon completion of the course. For more information, call Public Education Officer, Mr. Silverman at (516) 265-3694.

FREE BOATING COURSES IN NASSAU COUNTY

Flotilla 13-8 will sponsor a 12-lesson course in Boating Skills and Seamanship at two separate locations: Seaford High School and Bethpage High School. The course covers boat handling, aids to navigation, compass and charts, piloting, rules of the road, radiotelephone, marlinspike seamanship, legal requirements and a number of other subjects which will enable you to operate a boat safely and efficiently. The course is free to the public, except for a materials charge.

Seaford High School, Seaman's Neck Rd., Seaford; classes are on Tuesday, 8PM to 10PM, starting January 20.

Bethpage High School, Stewart Avenue, Bethpage. Registration 7PM to 9PM, January 26 and January 28. Classes on Tuesdays, 8PM to 10PM, beginning February 3.

For further information, phone Mr. Paul Henderson (516) 785-6779 or Mr. Gray Silverstein, (516) 735-5611.

FLOTILLA 22-5 Boating Course

Flotilla 22-5 of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is offer a 7-week course in safe boating skills and seamanship, with the option to continue if interested. Lessons will be held on Monday evening, beginning January 26, 1981 from 8 to 10PM, at the Harborfields Public Library, 31 Broadway, Greenlawn, L.I.

There is no fee except for a textbook which may be purchased at the first night at the time of registration. Upon completion of the course and test, all passing students will receive a certificate.

It is not necessary to own a boat to participate. For further information, call 692-6190 or 421-1836.

FLOTILLA 5-7

An instructional 18-session course in basic boating skills and seamanship combined with PRinciples of Sailing, will run successive Thursdays at 7PM, beginning January 29. Classes will be held in the Coast Guard Bldg., Marine Information Office at Battery Park, Manhattan.

The registration fee which includes books and materials will be $30. There will be one charge for any two individuals who can interchange their books and materials.

When registering January 29, please come early.

For additional info, call Jim Johnson, days: 267-4265; eves. 691-5343.

BASIC BOATING CLASS

The Great South Bay Power Squadron will conduct a spring Basic Boating Class for the general public. The class will be in the North Babylon High School on February 9, 1981 at 8PM to 10PM in the Yellow Cafeteria, with registration on **January 26 and 27** from 8PM to 9:30 p.m.

BOATING COURSE

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Plumb Beach Flotilla 11-7, will present a 16-week Safe Boating Course beginning on Monday, February 23, 1981 at the Gateway National Recreation Area, Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn, Bldg. 272 at 8PM. This course, the most extensive offered by the Auxiliary will cover basic boating skills and seamanship, chart reading, piloting, marine engines, weather and other interesting and vital subjects.

Upon successful completion of the course, an official certificate will be issued, which may entitle the boat owner to a discount on his marine insurance. In addition, this course is certified by the State of New York for young boaters between the ages of Ten and Sixteen. Upon successful

completion of this "Young Boaters Safety Course," a Safety Certificate will be issued to the young boater which is required for him or her to operate a power boat alone.

Both courses are offered free to everyone. There is a charge of $20 to cover the cost of the textbook, chart and piloting tools which will be used in the course; there is no charge for the materials pertaining to the "Young Boaters" course.

To reserve a place in the course, make your check or money order payable to: U.S.C.G. Auxiliary, Flotilla 11-7 and send to N. Melfi, 1778 East 28th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11229. Checks received **before January 31, 1981** will be entitled to a 10% PRE-REGISTRATION DISCOUNT.

For further information, contact Nick Melfi, Public Education Officer at (212) 689-6100 days, or (212) 998-6902 evenings.

BOATING COURSE

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Flotilla 11-06 will hold a fourteen week Basic Skills and Seamanship course at Brooklyn College. This course will begin in January and end in April. The course will cover navigation, marine rules of the road, marlinspike seamanship (splicing of lines), marine communications and basic boat handling.

For information, call Ronald Blicksilver, 10AM to 4PM, at (212) 253-7575.

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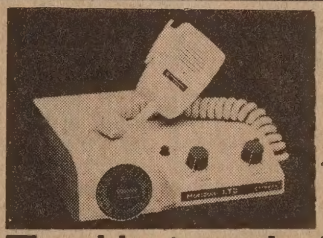

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I followed your suggestion to take a kid fishing this summer. In fact, I took four grandchildren out one day and got an education myself.

Sundials do have a purpose. They make the day for kids who never caught a fish before, and save the day when nothing else is biting.

In her "thank you" note, the youngest wrote, "The fish I caught were very sticky. They were so sticky I could stick them on the side of the bucket so they were comfortable." *Al Lynch, Valley Stream, N.Y.*

Taking a kid fishing can be as rewarding to the adult as it is to the child. Their insight into the "little things" is a refreshing change from a steady diet of adult views.

Our hats are off to you, Al, and anyone else who has made the effort to take a youngster fishing. We are currently in the process of establishing a Take-A-Kid Fishing program which I'm sure will be of interest to many of our readers. An upcoming editorial will outline the details. Fred P. Golofaro.

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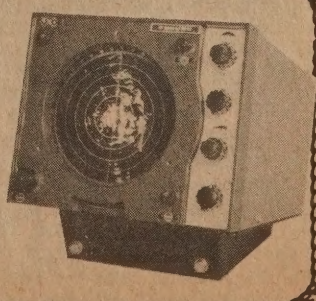

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NATIONAL SCENE

FATE OF LOCAL TUNA FISHING IN OUR HANDS

by Al Ristori

Last Fall I published a letter sent to Allen Peterson, Northeast Regional Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service, relative to the possibility of restricting giant tuna fishing in the southern area (south of Cape Cod) to rod and reel. This request was based upon the fact that this is the way the fishery is presently being conducted and, therefore, there would be no harm done to any other group if such a regulation were to be put in force at this time. A reply from Peterson offers no encouragement from the NMFS point of view, but does indicate that such a proposal could receive consideration if enough people were concerned enough to write in about it.

Why the concern about restricting this fishery to rod and reel? At present, there is no interference by other gear, except for some seining in the Block Island area. However, the bluefin tuna stocks north of Cape Cod have been declining rapidly—and there is every likelihood that more commercial effort will be directed to our area. Despite liberal daily quotas last year, the allocation of giant tuna for the hand gear (harpoon, handline, and rod and reel) segment of the giant tuna fishery north of Cape Cod didn't even come close to being filled. At the same time, there were a substantial number of fish residing off Block Island—and the greatest run of giants in the Mud Hole ever. A pattern seems to be developing of better fishing in more southerly waters, and poorer fishing to the north.

There is ample historical evidence to indicate that such shifts in tuna habitat preferences do occur. During the Sixties, giant tuna fishing was none too good in the States, but huge schools were to be found every summer in Newfoundland. That fishing has just about died out during the past decade, at the same time that such areas as Massachusetts Bay and Prince Edward reached their peak. According to the IGFA newsletter, MARINE ANGLER, only one tuna was caught in Newfoundland last year. However, the fishing is going downhill just as fast at the hotspots of the Seventies. The catch at North Lake, the major port on Prince Edward Island, fell far short of one hundred fish last year—down from over four hundred a few years ago. No fish were even sighted off eastern Nova Scotia, and the pens at St. Margaret's Bay fattened only fifty tuna—down from over eight hundred a few years ago. Even the incredible late season fishing at Canso Causeway (where 110 tuna averaging 1,064 lbs. each were caught in 1979) fell off to forty fish in 1980.

The situation is the same in northern U.S. waters. The tuna run off the Maine Coast has been off for two years in a row, and the Massachusetts catch is way down despite ever-increasing effort. Only south of Cape Cod has the catch been increasing. Could the worm be turning? If so, we'll soon be descended upon by harpooners, handliners, and purse seiners—and the same chaotic conditions that presently prevail in Massachusetts Bay will be visited upon us.

At present, giant tuna fishing in local areas is great sport. Even beginners were hooking up last year, and every so often they actually boated their fish. Other boats would get off their buoys and allow a boat with a hooked fish to move through, just as was the case in the "good old days" of the early Seventies in Massachusetts Bay. Unfortunately, ever since the Japanese drove the price of tuna sky-high, there is no longer any such courtesy exhibited in the northern fishing. The grounds are jammed wtih boats of every sort, and few of them will move. The rod and reel portion of the hand-gear catch declines every year, and most of the fish taken in that fashion are subdued on gear that hardly fits the usual definition of "sporting." Line tests in the 300 lb. area and virtually locked up drags are used to fight the giants almost "on the spot." Though it's still a logical spot to look for that one "super giant," there isn't much fun or sport left to the Massachusetts Bay tuna fishery.

It doesn't require much foresight to understand that the very same thing could well occur in our waters if the present trend continues. However, there is a relatively simple and straightforward way to prevent the ruination of our fishery. The Canadian Government had the foresight to take such action at Prince Edward Island some years ago. Fishing was restricted to rod and reel with 130 lb. test line being the maximum permitted. This did not stop commercial fishing as such, since every lobsterman in North Lake (and many of the other ports) has a chair on his boat and fishes for tuna every day of the season. Those who have fixed up their boats a bit carry tourists for a very reasonable fee and make a day's pay even if they don't get a hit. The Canadian regulation has made the small quota for the area go a long way, and kept visiting anglers coming from all parts of the world—even as the fishing has declined.

There is no reason why the National Marine Fisheries Service could not take similarly bold action. Al Peterson thinks my position may be a little shaky since the area isn't economically dependent on the tuna sport fishery (such as is the case in North Lake), and because the sport-caught fish are sold (though that is also the case on Prince Edward Island). Nevertheless, Al notes that "I personally feel the concept has some merit. If significant public support were to develop, consideration would be given to the proposal during a future regulatory change phase. It would be inappropriate for the NMFS to initiate such action, but it would have to respond to petitions from Mid-Atlantic fishermen."

Peterson has thrown the ball into our court. Now it's time for us to do something about it! Individuals and clubs should write to Allen Peterson urging him to restrict the southern area giant tuna fishery to rod and reel. The address is NMFS, Fisheries Management Division, 14 Elm St., Gloucester, MA 01930.

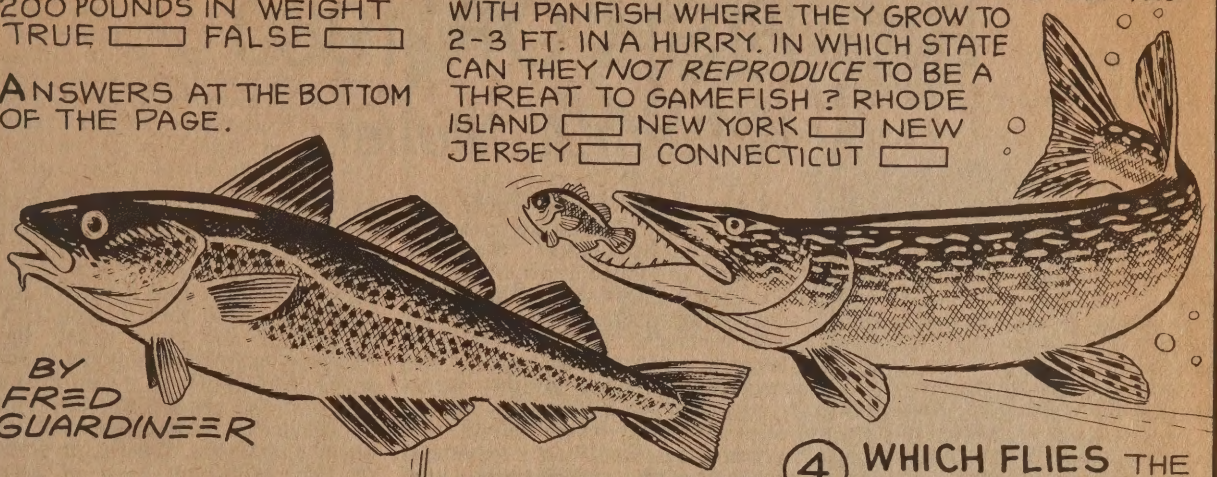
While it's unlikely that we'll achieve this goal in one year, it's important that the effort be started. Once commercial gear gets involved in the fishery it acquires "historic rights" in the eyes of NMFS. After that, it's almost impossible to get rid of it. The descent of this gear upon our grounds will not only involve congestion and gear conflict, but also the very real possibility that quotas will be used up quickly. That really wouldn't take much of an effort with our relatively small quota and a run of 1973 year class "mini-giants" off Block Island in the summer. The net result could be a closure of our fishery before the fish even arrive in the Mud Hole! If you're really concerned about this fishery, strike now while the opportunity presents itself!

THE FISHERMAN QUIZ

(1) **CODFISH** HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO GROW TO 200 POUNDS IN WEIGHT TRUE ☐ FALSE ☐

ANSWERS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE.

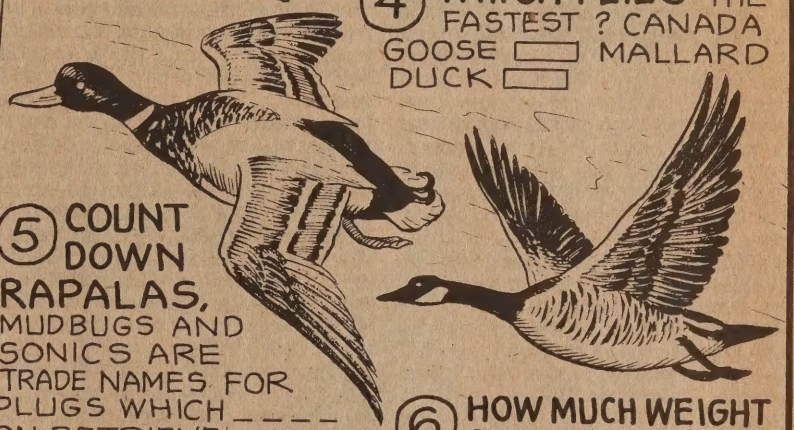
(2) **NORTHERN PIKE** HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED TO TIDAL WATER STATES OVERPOPULATED WITH PANFISH WHERE THEY GROW TO 2-3 FT. IN A HURRY. IN WHICH STATE CAN THEY *NOT REPRODUCE* TO BE A THREAT TO GAMEFISH ? RHODE ISLAND ☐ NEW YORK ☐ NEW JERSEY ☐ CONNECTICUT ☐



BY FRED GUARDINEER

(3) **STRIPED BASS** BITE BEST ONE HOUR BEFORE AND ONE HOUR AFTER HIGH TIDE, AND ONE HOUR BEFORE AND ONE HOUR AFTER LOW TIDE. TRUE ☐ FALSE ☐

(4) **WHICH FLIES** THE FASTEST ? CANADA GOOSE ☐ MALLARD DUCK ☐



(5) **COUNT DOWN RAPALAS,** MUDBUGS AND SONICS ARE TRADE NAMES FOR PLUGS WHICH _____ ON RETRIEVE.

(6) **HOW MUCH WEIGHT** CAN AN ICE BOUND LAKE HOLD, AN ICE FISHERMAN ASKS ?

1 – TRUE. AN ATLANTIC COD WEIGHING 211½ LBS., 6 FT. IN LENGTH WAS NETTED IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC. **2** – RHODE ISLAND. **3** – TRUE – *ALL FISH* – SALT OR FRESH- FEED MOST HEAVILY THEN. **4** – EQUAL. BOTH CAN FLY AT 60 MPH. **5** – DIVE. **6** – SAFE LOADS ARE : *2 INCHES* – ONE PERSON ON FOOT. *3 INCHES* – GROUP IN SINGLE FILE. *7½ INCHES* – 2 TON CAR. *8 INCHES* – 2½ TON TRUCK. *10 INCHES* – 3½ TON TRUCK. *12 INCHES* – 8 TON TRUCK. *15 INCHES* – 10 TONS. *20 INCHES* – 25 TONS.

FISH TALK

BIG FISH OF 1980

by William A. Muller

NOT ALL, BUT SOME! We won't attempt to mention every big fish taken in our waters this year because that number would be too big for one column. However, we have been impressed with several catches this season and it seemed like a nice topic for winter dreaming.

SEVENTY-ONE POUNDS AND GROWING! In July a bass was taken in the vicinity of the Norwalk Islands on the Connecticut side of Long Island Sound that has to impress any die-hard bassperson. The bass was taken on live bunker and according to the angler, John Baldino, it took about twenty minutes to subdue. That fish was only one pound shy of the all-tackle record that currently reigns atop the IGFA list. However, Baldino's fish will apparently supplant the old thirty pound class tackle record, which was sixty-five pounds. The sixty-five pounder was taken in Massachusetts waters. Frankly, with the number of fish hatched in the great year classes of the Sixties and then the greatest of them all in 1971, we have expected that the bass records would start falling and we expected that many of these records would be broken in Massachusetts waters. After all, one only has to read of the tremendous numbers of fifties and sixties that have been caught on the Cape in recent years to develop that expectation. Perhaps we are premature, however, since fish of the 1971 year class have not yet grown to record-setting proportions. The 1971 fish are now only pushing forty pounds from behind, so we may have to wait until the mid to late-1980s for the records to begin breaking like thunder across the sky on a hot summer night. We congratulate John Baldino on a great catch.

TALK ABOUT MONSTER BLUES! I can remember when a bluefish of fifteen pounds made headlines in any fishing column or magazine. In the late 1960s, we began to get our first hint of the size of the bluefish that would await us in the 1970s. Fish of ten to the low teens began to be taken regularly. Most of these fish were caught on live bunker meant for bass and some have argued that the big slammers were there all along, but few of us fished in such a way that catching them was likely. Maybe so, but when large bunker and big bass became a May and June Long Island Sound show, the big blues came along for the ride. Other anglers and fisheries biologists have argued that the big blues follow the big bunker. If there are big bunker, then the slammers will follow them. Whatever the truth is, by the early 1970s, mid-teen sized blues weren't anything to get excited about. By the late 1970s fish around twenty were common and specimens in the low twenties began to appear in the catches with enough regularity that they raised few eyebrows anymore. You'll remember that in November of 1977 I took a blue from the beach on a plug that weighed in at 20 lbs. 12 oz.! Never expected such a fish, but it did happen and I was very pleased. In short, big blues have pleased a lot of fishermen and taxidermists alike in recent years, and I'll bet that even bigger monsters lie ahead. Still, we all looked to the thirty-one pound blue taken off Chesapeake a half-dozen years ago as the standard to beat. Some fishermen said that that fish was an accident and that we would never see a bluefish in our waters to come even close to that size. "Sure," they said, "off South Africa, but never along the East Coast." The thirty-one pound all-tackle buster is certainly going to be a heavy mark to beat, but I still feel there's an outside shot. Anyway, leave it to my old friend Einar Grell to demonstrate to me that my belief isn't that crazy. Grell didn't advertise it when he caught the fish, but the fish was real. I think ol' Doc is getting very modest in his old age. He was reluctant to give me permission to discuss it in my column because of modesty, but I finally convinced him that such a catch was news and that his fans and readers would be very interested. The fish—a bluefish—was taken off the south shore of Long Island, and although Doc ain't talkin', I'll bet it was somewhere near the Patchogue grounds. How big was that blue? Are you ready? Would you believe twenty-eight pounds and six ounces?!! That's right, it isn't a misprint: 28-6!!! Congratulations, Einar, on an outstanding catch. If I'm not mistaken, that blue is either the second or third largest taken on hook and line along the East Coast!

MY TURN! Please forgive me my lack of modesty about this, but I guess that I'm a kid at heart. I won't apologize too much for telling you this though, because I suspect that it's my childish enthusiasm that makes me fish as hard as I do and if I ever lost that enthusiasm, I'd bet that I'll also lose the ability to write and discuss fishing with you, my friends. Therefore, it's only natural that I want to share my joy with you. One of my surf fishing goals has been to catch a bass in the fifty pound class or larger on an artificial in the Long Island surf. Honestly, with the bass stocks in poor shape and surf fishing in New York so poor in recent years, I was beginning to believe that I'd never see a fish that big on an artificial. In early November of 1980 with the help of some generosity I did it with a fish of fifty-two pounds. I'm happy, and that fish will be on the wall soon.

SOUNDS SMALL! Yes, my fish sounds small in comparison to Baldino's seventy-one pounder and even to the fifty-five pound bass taken by fellow club member Joe Vetrano in October of 1980 on the south shore. Joe's fish takes the biggest of species in the first year of the New York Surf Fishing Contest. When Joe called me about the fish he, too, was brimming with enthusiasm and that's great to see. Congratulations to Joe Vetrano on a great surf caught fish!

FEW DETAILS! A few fish have come to our attention for which we, unfortunately, have fewer details than we would like. Nonetheless, I'm going to tell you about them because we learned of these fish from very reliable sources. One fish was a fifty-four pound bass that was taken at the Sore Thumb. We do not know the name of the lucky fisherman, but we have been told that the fish was taken on a Rebel in late October. The Sore Thumb area is known to harbor many a giant bass, but it isn't easy to work a fish of that size to the gaff there and thus we extend our congratulations to the angler on a job well done. Another surf caught fish makes history. This was a bluefish that tipped the scales at twenty-four pounds and eight ounces. The way we heard this one, the giant gorillagator was taken on an Atom 40 in early November. The angler noticed a big school of bunker working its way down the beach and stayed until they came within casting range. The bunker were attended by some monster blues and on the first cast with a popper, the fisherman snagged a bunker. A big blue immediately jumped on the bunker and on the beach, that first fish weighed about twenty pounds. Later, the angler switched to an Atom 40 and took the giant blue. He had other monsters

that day, too. Most of the fish taken were in the seventeen to twenty-four pound range. Congratulations to this fortunate fisherman. Unfortunately, the blue was not weighed in officially for the New York Surf Fishing Contest, although it was weighed at a tackle store.

BIG WEAKFISH. One of the best weakfish of the 1980 season has to belong to Kevin Dobkowski. This tiderunner weighed seventeen pounds and was caught in Jamaica Bay. We do not know how this fish was taken or in what month, but we assume it fell for a live bunker or snapper drifted in one of the many holes in Jamaica Bay. Giant weakfish were a little hard to come by in the hole by the Fire Island lighthouse this year, although there was a good late season run for weaks in that area. Still, the way we heard it, most of the fish were in the ten to fourteen pound range. Now, weaks of that size are impressive and we certainly don't want to dismiss catches of fish that big as unimportant. But, it's been true for the last half-dozen years or so that that area yields a few weaks each year in the mid-teens and several were caught in the high teens. These fish are usually taken on live bunker or live snappers drifted in and out of that hole.

THEN THERE WAS THE COD! Okay, this fish wasn't taken on rod and reel, but how can you ignore an eighty-two pound codfish? I can't! Even though I'm not one of the hardy souls who bounces on the ocean in winter in order to catch a cod, I can still appreciate a fish like that. The cod in question was taken off the south shore on February 11, 1980 on a setline tended by Dan Koch and Al Grover.

LIKE WE SAID! The fish mentioned in this column this week are by no means all of the great fish taken by Long Island anglers in 1980. The column was motivated by the number of outstanding fish taken by people close to me like fellow club members, friends, and the one and only Doc Grell. It grew from there. However, we'd like to know about some of the noteworthy catches that we don't know about. How about you flounder fans out there? Did anyone take a 5 lb. plus founder in 1980? Or blackfish. Were there any 15 lbers. of that species caught in 1980? Fluke—we didn't hear of any fish in the 20 lb. category, but we'll bet at least one of you pulled one in. Sea bass, porgies, whiting and the rest have their trophies too.

PROPOSE A CONTEST. This won't be the kind of contest where someone wins something; but it could be a lot of fun. I'd like to suggest that you write in and tell me about your outstanding catches for 1980. As the letters come in, we'll print them and we'll see whose fish was biggest. Any fish species is eligible. That way many of you will get a chance to tell all your friends and relatives about the big one THAT DIDN'T GET AWAY!!!

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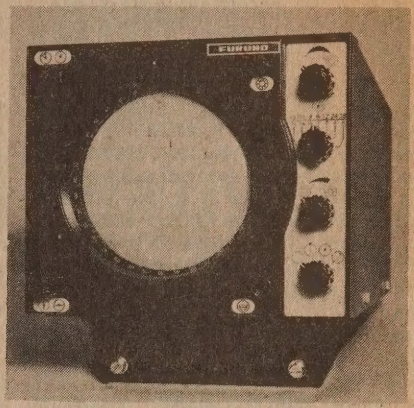

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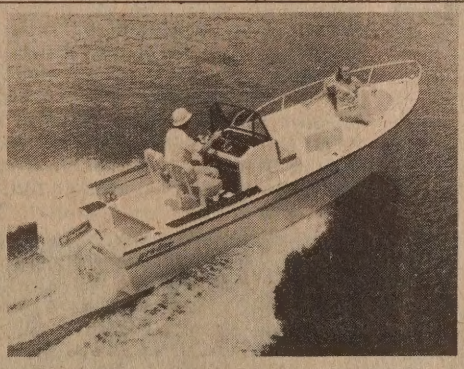

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How To Fail As A Fisherman

by Matt Ahern

To catch fish is no trick at all. So they tell me. The "they" in this instance being those who have never gone fishing. Nothing to it, they claim. You go where the fish are, put a bit of bait on the hook, lower it to the bottom, along comes some dumb fish—and you crank him in. Child's play. And therefore, according to these jeering folk, a sport fit only for children. Now, they argue, you take a sport which requires skill and brains to excel (and here they rattle off a list, never realizing that ninety percent of that roster are spectator sports), you excel at that, they say, and you're doing something.

Fine with me if that's the way they want it. Far from me to argue. A man convinced against his will—and all that. But I hope you don't fall for their jeering malarky, for it most certainly does take skill and intelligence to consistently catch fish—plus determination, concentration, and a host of other requirements never considered by those who deride and scorn our sport.

Throughout all my fishing life, I've had to contend with such derision. At one time this callousness from those who knew not caused me much anguish. I guess even then I held too much love for the game to allow anyone to sully its good name, and I foolishly got into heated arguments; but eventually learned to live with it.

Occasionally, I was forced to put these convictions to the test. I remember, for instance, one summer day in the long ago when I was barely in my teens and giving the Sheepshead Bay snapper population a hard time.

This particular August day I was at my usual spot on the sea wall and doing pretty well with the snappers. Sometime during late morning, a large school of three-quarter pound mackerel came rushing into the Bay and every fisherman worth his salt endeavored to get them to bite; but those fish would have nothing to do with us snapper fishermen. And yet I could see scores of mackerel zipping here and there just beneath the surface. For a fish-happy kid, it was extremely frustrating. So near and yet so far.

At the time, I didn't know a blamed thing about mackerel, nor I suppose did anyone else on the sea wall that morning. But I had sense enough to know those fish were feeding on something. The trick was to discover what that something was. I recall tossing over handfuls of sand for a possible reaction, and when I did, those mackerel came rushing over to the commotion. Then, on a whim, I tossed over a few bright pebbles and—surprise, surprise—these were quickly seized and just as quickly spat out. Close, but no cigar.

We now arrive at the part in this story which refutes those who ridicule fishing as a sport requiring no thought whatsoever. By trial and error, I had discovered that those mackerel were attracted only to shiny objects, such as white pebbles and the like. When I tossed over bits of blue stone, those fussy fish showed no interest at all. Now my next thought

Faith in one's ability produces fish.

was: what was available that could be placed on a hook and serve as a lure?

Easy. I ripped a pearl button from my shirt, broke open the thread holes with the awl blade of my pocket knife, and forced the hook through the enlarged opening. The button lay neatly in the bend of the hook. I lowered this device below the surface. Nothing happened—until I moved it. Then, seemingly from nowhere, several fish rushed it—and I caught my first mackerel! From then on, all I had to do was lower the lure, jiggle it a bit and one mackerel after another took hold. When I quit fishing, I had filled a twelve quart bucket to brimming. Enough was enough.

I continued to fish mackerel this way whenever the opportunity presented itself. And that summer there were many opportunities. In fact, this caused my parents to wonder why I was the only kid in the neighborhood who never had buttons on his shirt. I'll admit, though, that it took awhile before the thought of raiding the family sewing basket entered my mind, whereupon things in general became more peaceful in the Ahern household.

There is more to fishing than putting bait on our hooks, as some would have us believe. To take up the sport without thought to the fish and immediate conditions is the surest way to fail. Much planning and consideration is needed. Fish aren't stupid—not one bit—else they would have perished along with the dinosaurs. There may not be Einsteins among fish, but neither are there village idiots.

Let me say now that you and I have much in common. We are all well acquainted with two "fishermen." Their names are Hy Hope and Opto Mist. Beware!

From personal experience I have found Hope to be a nice enough fellow. But I am not deceived, for this "nice fellow" has often proved fickle, quite shallow, and most unreliable in a pinch. Mist, on the other hand, is more subtle. He destroys our plans by keeping a low profile. Both have dogged me all my fishing life.

Neither are good fishermen, though each has every right to be, for they have been my constant companions on hundreds of trips over the years. And, sad to say, I have fallen victim to their treachery and disloyalty scores of times. But this is solely my fault, for their allegiance is never promised.

Even though I strive to do so, I cannot completely rid myself of their nagging influence. They haunt me each waking hour and think little of invading my slumber. They are indeed persistent.

Therefore, I say: if you wish to become a proficient fisherman, do not be tempted by these charlatans. Give them the deep-six—the sooner, the better. If you wish to excel at the fishing game, listen not to their siren call. Hy Hope and Opto Mist have dashed the dreams of many a sinker bouncer—mine included. To court these crafty fellows means not only slow advancement in our game, but guarantees a sure path to failure.

But, you say, everyone has hope, we couldn't exist without it, and each of us at one time or another is an optimist. True enough; and where would we humans be without hope? But I'm afraid Hope and his buddy have no place in our fishing world. Where the con comes in is that we, in our zeal, mistake hope for faith in our ability to put fish in the bucket. Hope will never fill that bucket. Faith in one's ability will. It is as simple as that.

Let me ask something. Do you recall the times you started off a fishing trip by saying: "I sure hope I do okay today?" What happened? Don't tell me. I know. You returned home sadly disappointed, didn't you? And why not? All you had going for you was fickle hope.

But what happened when you began to concentrate on the game? What happened when you realized, as we all must eventually realize, that "there is more to the fishing game than putting bait on the hook?" Your failures became fewer and fewer, didn't they? You learned to substitute faith for hope. And when you did, the fishing game took on a whole new aspect. You learned as I did, and as thousands have before us: it is not all of fishing to catch fish.

So, for you fellows who are just starting out, or whose "luck" has not been all that's desired, be of good cheer. True, the road to more and better fishing is narrow, but the signposts are well illuminated. For starters, learn all you can of those fish of interest. Learn your terminal tackle, your hook nomenclature, keep those fishing records, fish with a buddy—preferably one who is more advanced. And—most important—ask questions. And more questions! Questions without end! The road to failure is littered with the bones of fishermen who have refused to do these simple things.

If you have no one to ask those nagging questions of, don't hesitate to get in touch with me. I'll do my best for you. We fishermen must stick together, you know.

Incidentally, I have received a fresh supply of DuPont's free 32-page booklet on knot tying. Besides containing many important knots for bottom fishermen, it also diagrams two simple methods on how to snell hooks. It is indispensable.

If you want one, send a stamped, self-addressed #10 (4x9½) envelope to my home: 39 King Street, Hampton Bays, New York 11946. If more than one is desired, just add an extra stamp to the return envelope. Last year I received more than two thousand requests for this booklet. There's one waiting for you.

Next week we'll get to why certain sinker bouncers become master fishermen and why others do not.

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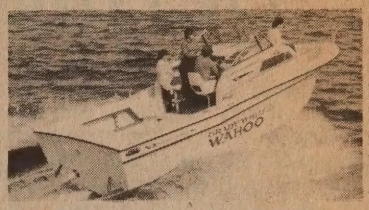

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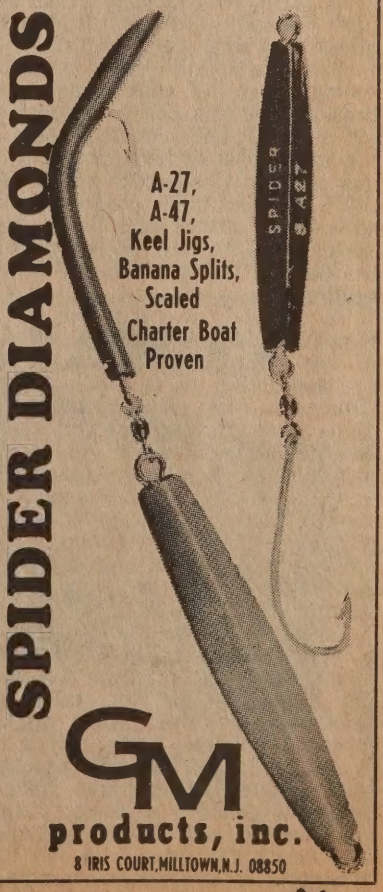

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SURF FISHING

BEHIND ME THE DUNES

by Andy Regina

I cursed as I slipped on the unfamiliar gravel, blinded by darkness, hampered by tight-fitting waders, and encumbered with excess baggage. The two fishing rods in my right hand served as a staff as I braced their butts into the sand, while the bulging canvas carry-all cushioned my left hip 'til I righted myself and continued my struggle towards the water. The trek from the parking lot had me gasping and panting for breath and I was literally bathed in sweat although there was a cool breeze blowing. Muscles that had not been taxed in years cried out for relief, and only the gentle wash of the surf on the beach ended my agony. I set down my burdens and took a deep breath, lighting a cigarette as I surveyed the situation.

There wasn't too much for me to survey. I had not been out at night in years, and night blindness severely limited my vision. Still, within my small world, I saw a sloping beach of hard-packed sand scattered with gravel and small, empty shells that tumbled back and forth in slow, rolling waves too weak to be called breakers. I dug a pair of sandspikes out of my bag and embedded them in the sand, twisting and turning each one past the small rocks and gravel that impeded their progress. The spikes now embraced a fishing rod apiece, rods that had been rigged in the parking lot in the beam of my headlights.

My choice of two rods was not a haphazard one. Most beach rats opt for two rods most of the time, except perhaps during the fall when all the fishing—or most of it—is done with plugs. Even then two rods are usually taken anyway: a light one and a heavy one, to meet any situation that might arise, although one rod is actually used at a time. To take the utmost advantage of my rare outing, I had taken a conventional surf outfit for bait fishing, and an intermediate spinning rig for plugging.

Terminal tackle was simple, kept so by years of experience. I never cared much for swivels and such, considering them catch-alls for rocks and weeds, and prefer direct rigging whenever possible. A loop tied at the end of the line not only held a sinker, but facilitated quick, simple changes whenever changes of sinker weight were needed, and I have always felt that hooks tied directly to the line afforded a more acute sense of feel. Twin 1/0 long-shanked beak style hooks, tied on fifteen inch snells of thirty pound test leader material, were attached via dropper loops. The bottom hook was placed merely inches above the sinker and the top hook about eighteen inches above that, or just high enough to avoid tangling with the bottom hook.

I like the idea of using two hooks when I fish. That low hook will take care of any fish that feeds directly on bottom as well as bottom-grubbing game fish, and the high hook not only accounts for game fish feeding at mid-depths, but many large bottom dwellers that often rise up a bit for a nice fresh bait. If crabs or bergalls are persistently stripping that bottom hook, a simple leader float will solve that problem, keeping you close to your desired strike zone but out of the reach of pests. Furthermore, the use of two hooks enables you to fish two different baits at the same time, if only to determine which bait may be preferred at that moment. It then becomes a simple matter to switch to two preferred baits, thereby doubling your chances of potential hook-ups. I got out a box of sand worms and placed it on the ground, then squatted down to bait my hooks. That's when I made my first mistake!

Actually, it was my second mistake. The first mistake had been in coming here, I thought, as a cold breeze blew through the wide open space between my legs when my old waders split at the crotch. I wasn't even angry at Doc Muller either, for planting the whole stupid idea in my head in the first place, with his tales of big bass on live eels at night, on the south shore. If it had not been for that call he made (and boy! he never let me forget that he called, either!), I'd probably have been content in my own neck of the woods, tonging school bass on light tackle in the western Sound. But all I could envision after that call were cow bass laying at my feet, and I guess I went a little crazy.

First of all, I drove my poor wife crazy when I decided to dig my old waders out of the closet. She's the only one that can ever find anything around here anyway; and just when I could swear that my waders were lost forever, she reached into a closet and took them out, still on the hanger she had placed them on fifteen years ago! Ignoring her advice to check them for leaks and try them on for size, I threw them in the foyer and got some tackle ready, waiting for my son to come home before broaching my next problem. Surprisingly enough, when he got through laughing, he agreed to let me borrow his car, admonishing me to return early and to make sure there was some gas left in the tank—giving me a dose of the same medicine I heaped on him when he was young and the shoe was on the other foot.

My next mistake was in trying to get some live eels in the Bronx. Though we have several bait shops, only a couple stay open in the evening, and those never carry live bait of any sort except worms. Rather than risk not getting any bait at all, I settled for a few dozen sand worms, and drove over the Throgg's Neck Bridge to a beach on the south shore that used to produce for me long ago. The exact location is unimportant; suffice it to say that it was adjacent to an inlet and offered a choice of fishing either the ocean, the inlet, or a bay, which is what made it my favorite in the first place.

Parking in an empty lot, I rigged my rods and struggled to don my waders, amazed that rubber could shrink so much in such a short time. I had accumulated a lot of extra blubber over the years and it was all I could manage to cram that extra bulk into waders that had once been roomy enough to accommodate extra clothing in cold weather. Forget the web belt! Opened to its maximum length it still did not reach around my girth, so I threw it back into the car, locked things up, and started the hike I was talking about at the beginning of this story.

Shaking my head at my split waders, I pictured an ad in one of those men's magazines my son was forever bringing home, "Open crotch waders for the erotic fisherman," and realized that my wading would be restricted to water no higher than my knees, or else I'd be in real trouble. Threading squirming sand worms on each hook, I went to the water's edge and cast out so far that I was actually proud of myself—until I realized that the hooks and sinker had snapped off.

I had forgotten to disengage the reel before I cast, and mumbled some choice words as I walked back to re-rig and re-bait again.

One thing I wished I would never forget again was to heed my wife's advice! There I was, standing in the water in waders, and my feet were

getting wet. Wet? They were getting soaked! The old rubber had become porous over the years and cold water leaked in freely. Thank God my wife wasn't there, because one little "I told you so" from her right then would have seen the end of a beautiful thirty-year relationship!

Shaking my head again, I clambered up the beach and set the rod in the sand spike, squishing and shivering, and slipped a handkerchief into the rod tip, to signal fish bites. The dog ratchet on the reel had been removed years ago—it made too much noise at night and drew a crowd if you got lucky. Picking up the spinning rod, I soggily trudged down the beach a bit to do a little plugging. Aside from being cold and wet, I was feeling pretty good, and could even see better as my eyes grew used to the darkness. I heard sounds not heard in years, and my memory banks strained to make the correct associations. Down to my right was the distinct sound of baitfish, possibly sand eels, and those gurgled plops sounded like weakfish feeding on the surface. Inching painfully along, I got closer to the sounds, but still could not spot anything.

I sailed a five inch swimming plug as far towards the sounds as I could and nervously started what I hoped would be a slow enough retrieve, pausing to let the plug swing through what appeared to be a small rip. As the line straightened out I could swear I felt a hit, a light tap that made me as shaky as a schoolboy on his first date. Reeling in and checking my plug, I repeated that same cast and once again felt that distinct, faint tap. Striking back instinctively, I felt the hooks strike home, and was into a small fish that I shortly overpowered onto the beach. There, flopping at my feet, was not some small school bass or even a small weakfish, but a snapper not much bigger than the plug it attacked.

Figuring to use that snapper as live bait on my meat stick, I started back up the beach, trying to discern my rod in the darkness. Halfway there, I spotted my handkerchief waving back and forth in mid-air, like some cheerleader's pom-pom, and ran as fast as I could , slipping and stumbling in my frantic efforts as my boots squished and my waders flapped. While I was gone, a fish had taken a bait, and line peeling through the rod guides picked up the handkerchief and jammed it into the tip, which effectively stopped more line from being stripped off the reel by the fish. The line was see-sawing back and forth as the fish tried short, lateral runs, and only sheer luck saved the rod from being pulled out of the spike and towed to sea.

"About time some GOOD luck fell my way," I thought, as I removed the stuck handkerchief, tightened my drag a bit, and lifted my rod. A fish, and I mean a BIG fish, was still on as I reeled in slack line while wading into the water. The fish felt real heavy but didn't fight too hard, and I wondered how long it had been on before I had gotten to it. I had been plugging for about twenty minutes and the walk back and forth took about another fifteen minutes, so it was conceivable that the fish could have been struggling for a half hour, accounting for its sluggishness. Still, gaining line as I slowly worked the fish to the beach, I was certain that it was big, and when it got about twenty feet away I spotted it wallowing in the surface. "My God," I thought, "it has to be the world's biggest striper!" The fish was easily five or six feet long!

Then my fish seemed to break in half, and each half swam off in opposite directions, and one-half just kept swimming 'til it was out of sight. I had caught a double-header—two fish on at the same time on separate hooks; no great shakes for flounders or porgies, but a rarity for game fish from the beach. Happy to have one fish left, I worked it within ten feet and saw that it was a gigantic weakfish, hooked in the worst possible place it could be:that fragile lip that gave these beautiful sea trout the name of weakfish

One wrong move, one surge by the fish or one mistake by me, and that fish would be lost also. There was only one thing for me to do, and that was to wade out to that fish and gaff it. I tried not to think about the cold water invading my torn waders and fought the weight of rapidly filling boots as I painfully got within striking distance of that great fish. Reaching behind me for my gaff, I panicked when I discovered that it was not there! It was still attached to my web belt, laying on the floor of the car because it didn't fit anymore!

All I could do was either reach for the fish and try to lift it by the gills, or try to walk it back into the beach. The fish was just laying there, fairly docile, and it was about twenty feet back to dry land, so I figured that my best bet would be a quick snatch and grab. You know the rest of that sad story, don't you?

As I leaned to grab the fish I inadvertently lowered my rod, creating enough slack to permit that fish to just swim off the hook, which easily slide through the big hole it had worn in the fish's lip. The fish lay there for a second, then, with a sweep of its shovel-sized tail, the biggest weakfish I ever saw swam slowly away.

I shook my head as I headed up the beach, then burst out laughing as I dug out a cigarette and searched hopelessly for a dry match. Anyone within earshot must have thought I was surely made, but I was not. Neither was I angry. Honest!

I was, after all, once more doing what I loved best, and though everything that could possibly go wrong did so, I was in my element again. I was happy just having the deep, dark Atlantic out in front of me again—and behind me, the dunes!

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RIGGING OFFSHORE LURES

by Pete Barrett

"That lure isn't rigged right!" The captain grabbed the brand new, skirted artificial trolling lure from my hands and headed for the cabin where his rigging gear was stashed. In minutes, he was back on deck with a newly rigged lure. His mate looked at it and shook his head, "I never rigged my lures that way. Can't stand that leader material; breaks too easy and the fish can see it."

The ensuing argument was won by the captain, not on merits of the subject; but his mate's desire to keep his job and peace aboard the charter boat. The difference of opinion is typical wherever offshore anglers gather. There are many ways to rig the wide variety of increasingly popular new breed of plastic and metal, rubber-skirted lures.

The most questioned decisions come when deciding leader material, leader length and the pound test of the leader. Most anglers agree on the basics of color selection, head action, lure length and weight—although even these less controversial topics get caught in the middle of some heated arguments.

The four choices of leader materials are monofilament, braided cable, plastic coated cable and single strand wire. Mono is the least visible and most easily handled by inexperienced mates or small boat anglers. Its weak spot is the ease with which toothy fish, like wahoo, king mackerel, sharks and even small bonito can cut it in two. You not only lose the fish, but also a lure that may be worth a sawbuck.

Braided cable is tough and resists kinking. Once made up correctly, a cable leader will last a long time. Some anglers feel that cable is too visible in the water, a factor to consider for sure; but one which is sometimes hard to believe as a trolling lure skips along on the surface in the white wake of your boat where any leader would be hard to see. Cable does have some added weight to it, as compared to mono, and this can affect the action of the lure—for good or bad.

Plastic coated cable is not very popular in our neck of the Canyons, but is used occasionally. Its main disadvantage is the ability of the surface coating to fray and peel away while in the mouth of a sharp-toothed fish. One fish makes the leader useless if frayed too badly.

Single strand wire is relatively invisible in the water, but does kink on some fish, like marlin, that like to go for walks in the sky. A single kink can snap the leader with surprisingly light pressure. Single strand is the easiest to use when rigging baits, and bending a haywire twist to the end of a length of wire is much faster than installing crimps in cable or mono.

There actually is no one leader to use for rigging offshore lures, only general rules of thumb to use as guides. The final choice is really up to the individual angler and that is really what fishing is all about—using your own brain to figure the solutions to angling problems.

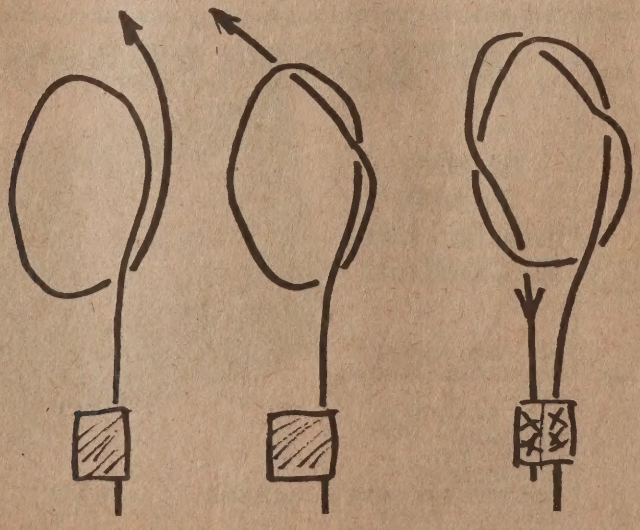
Monofilament is most often used when seeking tuna, marlin, sailfish and dolphin. Cable can be used for the same fish, yet also for any fish with a wicked set of dentures. Single strand wire is not usually used as an entire leader, but can be used as a trace leader at the very end of the leader where it attaches to the lure.

Most offshore lures as assembled from the manufacturer are equipped with 125 lb. test mono or 275 lb. cable with a total leader length of fifteen feet. Note that the leader is measured from the end of the hook bend to the loop on the end of the leader. This measurement must be accurate if you want to stay within IGFA regulations. Maximum total length of COMBINED leader and double line cannot exceed forty feet. If you have tied a twenty-five foot long double line, be careful of the length of the leader so as not to go beyond fifteen feet.

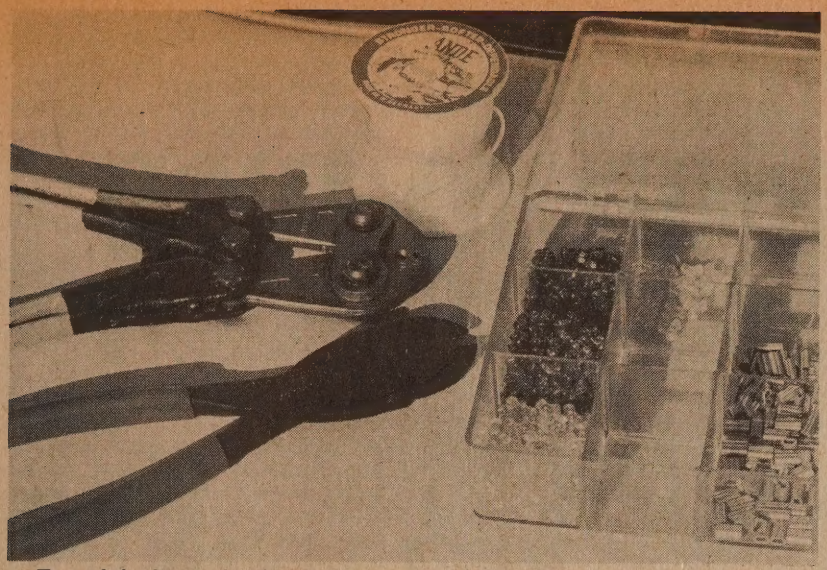
Fishermen who head offshore in smaller boats than giant forty or fifty foot deluxe sport fishing vessels modify the length of leader to a shorter length since the shorter leader is easier to handle in the smaller boat. A fifteen foot leader seems to be a mile long when you have to handline the leader in at the last few moments. A shorter leader gets the fish closer to the rod tip and to the side of the boat, facilitating handling by the leader man. My own offshore lures are rigged with ten foot leaders, and the double line is then thirty feet long (the maximum allowed).

Some anglers find it hard to store cable or mono leaders while still attached to the fishing lure and it is difficult to find a tackle box to hold the larger lures. One answer is to rig the lure with a one foot long cable leader and a matching mono leader of fourteen feet snapped onto the double line. The mono is always left attached, only the shorter lure and leader is changed.

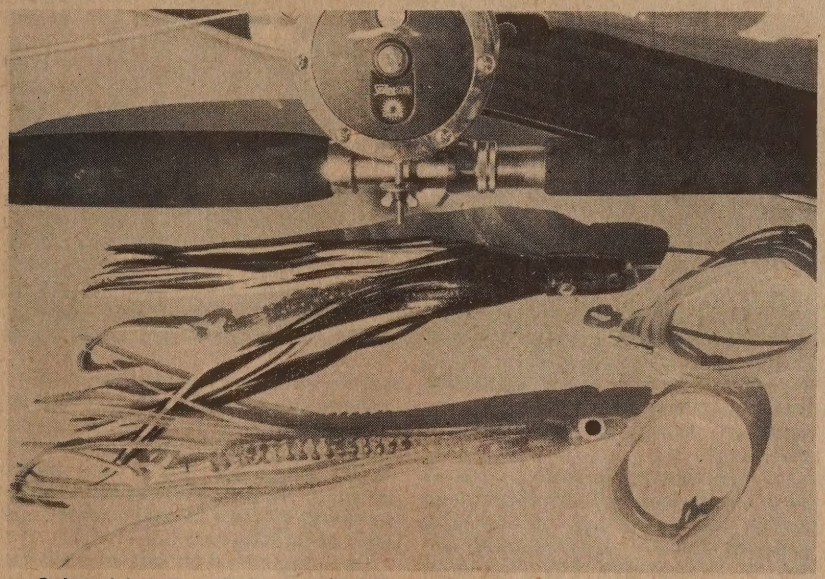
When rigging a new lure or re-rigging an old lure, use a loop as shown in the diagram. First place two crimping sleeves on the leader, then pass the leader through the hook eye twice to form a circle. Slip the tag end through the loop twice to form a double overhand knot. Pass the tag



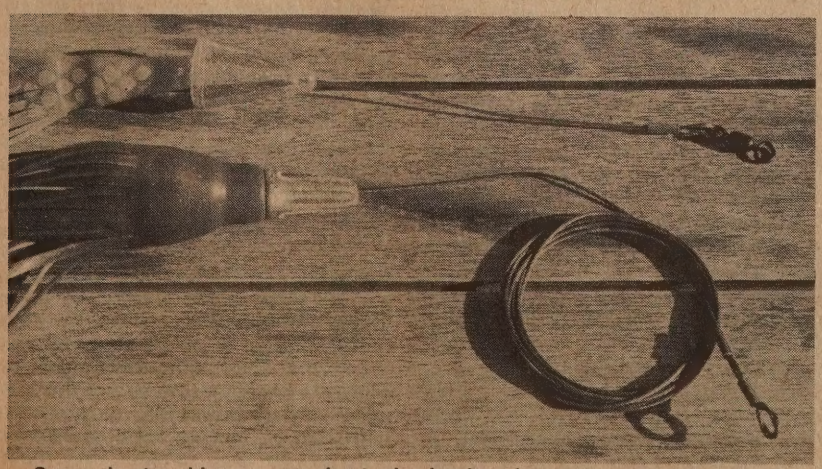
OFFSHORE LEADER LOOP: Form a loop, then pass the bitter end through the loop two times. Snug the loop to a small size with your fingertips, then crimp the loop.



Two of the best crimping tools are made by NicoPress and Sevenstrand. Small compartmented plastic box stores crimps, beads, hooks and egg sinkers.



Colored beads add flash and color under skirt, but more importantly serve as spacers between lure head and hook, so hook bend lies at edge of skirt.



Some charter skippers use short wire leaders for easier storage. Longer monofilament leader is left attached to end of double line. Short wire also prevents loss of lure to sharp-toothed fish like wahoo or sharks.

end back through the hook eye and then crimp the sleeves in place after you snug the loop to a small size.

Colored beads are slid onto the leader next. They provide extra flash and color, but most importantly they act as spacers to get the correct distance from the hook bend to lure head. Slide the lure head down the leader to check its position, adding or taking away beads until the hook lies perfectly at the very edge of the skirt. A loop is then made in the end of the leader in the same manner as the hook was attached; only this time there is no hook, only the bare loop.

The best sleeves for crimping are the Nicopress type sold in some tackle shops. The Nicopress crimping tool is expensive, but does provide the strongest crimp possible. Most offshore anglers use the Sevenstrand crimps or the Berkeley crimps with absolutely no difficulty. Sevenstrand makes fine, well-built crimping pliers that will make neat, strong crimps of any brand material.

Sevenstrand markets stainless steel multi-braided cable and better still, aircraft cable known as Duratest 49, the best cable. Bulk spools of Ande line in 125, 200 or 250 lb. test are most often used for mono leaders.

The smallest of skirted lures, looking like miniature "Green Machines" are fast replacing Japanese feathers for inshore tuna species. They can be rigged with short five foot single strand wire leaders, and combined with a matching five or ten foot mono leader ahead of it. Again, the shorter leaders are more easily stored.

Cedar plugs are usually made up with either mono or single strand wire leaders. The combination leader also works well with the plugs, and the wire provides a measure of safety in case a bluefish or bonito gets too close to the lure.

The choice of whether to use mono or cable can be clarified by the water conditions, the fish you seek and the style of lure; but always the decision is open to many points of view. Tuna, dolphin and smaller inshore tunas seem to be the least leader shy; while white marlin, kingfish and blue marlin are generally more spooky of obvious leaders.

Rough water conditions tend to hide the appearance of leaders, while calm water often makes even a mono leader stand out like a sore thumb. Smaller fish require less leader strength, yet if there is a shot at bigger fish it can pay to rig for the larger fish. Many times when looking for yellowfins of fifty to one hundred pounds we were surprised by big-eye tunas of 250 lbs.! Too light a leader—and goodbye fish.

Offshore anglers are no different from their inshore neighbors; they like to tinker and change things to make them "just right." Experimenting with various offshore lure rigs can be another way to spend idle time in-between fishing trips and it may just pay off in better catches.

SKYLINE WHITING & LING:

TOO GOOD TO MISS

by William N. Herold

It began in a comfortable easy fashion; ended in an easy comfortable fashion; and all that came in-between was a reflection of its beginning and ending. Sounds too good to be true regardless of what it is all about, doesn't it? Well, it was! The reference here is to the fantastic winter fishery available to the adventuresome amongst the ranks of metropolitan anglers—specifically, the whiting and ling catches which are being harvested in seemingly unparalleled numbers in recent years. The trip which merited the high praise at the opening of this piece originated out of New Rochelle, New York on a beautiful day in January. The hankering for a winter trip to catch whiting and ling usually starts as a dull sensation about the first week in November and mounts steadily to a mad craving by early December each year. Residing in the City of Rye makes New Rochelle the obvious choice for my port-of-call. Captain Pete Pearson's boat, the "Klondike VII" anually gets the nod if for no other reason than its proximity to my home. But, if the truth be known, this speedy boat with its likable crew and patronage would be more than enough lure for this sea dog if she decided to tie up at some other less strategic tidal spot. The two things that impress me the most with this party boat are two of the things that would earn my respect in any facet of living: cleanliness and efficiency!

On the day in question, I had a fairly strong feeling of optimism even before the first rays of sunlight streaked across the moisture-strewn deck as we sped past Execution Light with the Throgs Neck bridge dead ahead. The previous evening I had scanned all the local papers and weeklies in search of information as to how the boats were doing on the silver hake (whiting) and ling off New York Harbor. All of the available written material had nothing but incredibly good things to say; and the only remaining steps were to call a few good friends who are on the water almost every day for verification. Calls made, I rested easily in front of my desk pondering as to how heavily or how lightly to rig for the tasty little devils, when it dawned on me that the one final call had yet to be made. I was cordially greeted by Pete Pearson's wife who matter of factly told me of the excellent catches the fares had been taking all week, and of the combined luxury of calm mild weather. So it was no great secret as to why I was run through with optimism on this morning, and easily passed my surplus on to my partner, Larry Fisherman. Larry is no stranger behind a rod and reel and needs little introduction to folks down and around Westchester County. He has caught nearly every desirous species that swims along our coast; and he is certainly not above doing battle with some less glamorous cold water fishes such as whiting and ling.

Deciding on which tackle to rig for whiting and ling is no problem, as almost any medium to heavy action boat rod coupled with a compatible reel spooled with thirty to forty pound monofilament will suffice. Although some captains will allow you to jig with artificials for the whiting when the number of fishermen are down, most will utilize the standard tri-hook rig with appropriate sinkers from between four to twelve ounces depending on the wind and the current.

At 6:30 a.m., Larry and I were storing our eight foot rods in two of the ample rod holders supplied along the rails of the "Klondike." After giving Larry the "nickel tour" on his initial voyage with the crew of the "Klondike VII," I concentrated my efforts on photographing the uniqueness of a winter voyage aboard the "Klondike." Unlike New Jersey or Sheepshead Bay where the party packets simply throttle up the coast to the bountiful inshore grounds off New York Harbor, the Klondike is forced to

weave its way westward down Long Island Sound under the Throgs Neck and Whitestone bridges and finally twisting through the East River out into the harbor. One usually doesn't account for a formal sightseeing tour of New York City while in pursuit of fish, but such is the case here where the fishermen are subjected to the magnitude and splendor of the New York skyline. The Empire State Building, the World Trade Center, the Statue of Liberty all shimmered in olympian grandeur as the Klondike slinked unnoticed out to sea at the base of their shadows. Filling the viewing screen of my 35 mm camera presented no challenge whatsoever on this fine day.

The nearly two hour ride slipped by unceremoniously and we soon began to take notice of the fleet of other party boats etched on the horizon in the area of Ambrose Tower and Scotsman Light. Boats from both New Jersey and New York intermingled and jockeyed for position over the densely schooled whiting. Larry had minutes earlier procured a bucket of cut-up mackerel strips from the amiable mates which were supplied as our initial baits; and as the horn sounded to begin fishing we were two of the first of the nineteen anglers aboard to hit pay dirt. Larry's whiting struck before his three-hook rig had settle completely to the bottom, and in short order, Larry dispatched the two pounder to our virgin fish pail. My fish was far from bragging size and was relegated to be used as bait for the next time we baited up. It has been the experience of most who have fished for whiting that it helps to utilize first-caught whiting as bait. Even though it was Larry's premier voyage for these frostfish, he lost little time in putting a substantial dent in the resident population; and my just returns came only in the satisfaction that the bottom-hugging ling were most obliging to my dropback tactics.

The fishing was marvelous as each drift provided at least three to four fish for us. The brilliant sunshine coupled with the unusually placid seas provided all that day's fares with story book-like conditions. The day seemed to leisurely slide by, and in seemingly no time at all the Klondike was knifing up the East River to the accompaniment of a magnificent winter sunset. With the pool fish duly noted, the mates began the cleaning of the day's catch as practically all the anglers dozed contentedly in the confines of the cozy cabin.

Frostfish are the center of attention for almost all local party boats during the months of December through February; and even as you read this article, outrageous catches are being religiously hauled within a stone's throw of the "Lady with the torch!" It is crazy that so few fishermen tap this rewarding resource. Of all of my cronies who fish so intensely most of the year and pang at the mere thought

(Continued on page 31.)

Patron displays part of a typical day's take in the fertile water off New York City Harbor.

Average size whiting (silver hake) comes over the rail amidst the fleet of New York City.

Why Charter?

Part Two — *by Capt. John DeMaio*

After many years at sea, fishermen learn how and what is best for their boats. Not only does the wise fisherman buy quality for reliability, but he will usually do his own labor. Doing your own work has the virtue of getting the job done right, knowing exactly what was done, and saving on repair bills.

Recently I met a private boat owner at a dinner party and I asked if he did his own repairs. In a casual manner he said, "I just give it to the yard and let them fix it." Unfortunately, most of us already have next week's salary spent and cannot afford the luxury of having a boat yard handle our repairs. And it is a luxury! If you're unable to make at least minor boat repairs—be prepared to pay!

Some guys save money by hauling out at a poor man's boat yard (a do-it-yourself type operation). Nothing is ever thrown away in these yards: rotting hulks and rusting engine blocks litter the area. They're for scavenger parts shopping. Propellers are banged off the shaft by a wheel puller. An attitude of "it's a sin to spend money" prevails here. All well and good if you can get away with it. But can you? It has been my experience that these money-savers are always left at the docks, always working on the boat. Sure, they saved $10 on a part, but they lost two day's fishing time.

About four years ago, I had a slip alongside one of those money-saving handy-men. A carpenter by trade—not a mechanic. At the time I was having trouble with an engine. Every time I bought parts he never neglected to tell me he could get it cheaper and so forth. He had me feeling inferior and stupid, compared to his cunning and mechanical ability. In the long run, I came out the better. Mr. Money-saver was always at the dock trying to make his Rube Goldberg boat operate correctly. The moral here is that even the most capable of handy-men must shell out cash at some point.

Time must also be devoted to the maintenance of your boat. Proper maintenance will save repairs, so allow some of your free time for this—the time you wanted to spend fishing.

Quality boat yards offer experienced service for the repair and maintenance of your vessel. This service starts at approximately $22 an hour; hopefully a problem is solved the first time around. This is ideal, but hardly ever a fact. Boats are not automobiles with stock parts—you cannot find two that are the same. Finding and fixing the problem is often the expensive process of elimination. Even the shrewdest mechanic has to go one step at a time; then again, you could be lucky and the trouble found instantly. I have had it both ways.

Beware the friendly guy who appears to know a lot about mechanics and may even be one. He will stand behind you and give instructions while you tear down an engine in search of the dead cylinder mystery.

Chartering is an economical way to ensure a good time for friends and fish for the table.

When the problem goes beyond his knowledge, he suddenly finds a reason to leave. "Gotta go now. Why don't you find someone who knows more about this?" There you are, left with skinned knuckles, greasy decks, and a draw bucket fill of nuts and bolts. To beat all, the boat laying alongside you has pulled in with a box full of bass and says the fish are "all over the place out there." Oh, the pain of frustration and anguish. Oh, the pain. I have been there also; you want to cry out of despair, or take the opposite route of anger and start biting fishing rods in half.

All this is the gasoline engine. Forget about diesels. To rebuild a six cylinder diesel engine you can expect to pay out at least $3000 and up.

What about boat leaks? Automatic bilge pump manufacturers have made fortunes on leaky boats. Here again, you will most likely run the expensive trial by error gauntlet: Fiberglas cloth and resin, caulking, putty, White Diamond and Git-Rot. Don't forget the all-time favorite: BoatLife. Some owners have used enough BoatLife that if it were thrown at them all at once, they would be stoned to death.

At the end of your gallant run, only the height of frustration is your reward. The boat still leaks. Finally, after losing time and money you do what was advised in the first place and let an experienced carpenter replace the planks where needed. Very expensive business.

Many of you readers may chuckle at this and say, "Not me. I have a glass boat." Hull maintenance on a glass boat is less expensive, but not entirely without the need of repairs, service, and costs, plus the initial expense of purchasing the boat is higher.

Next is the daily operating cost. First consideration is fuel. Since most boat engines are gasoline and not diesel, we will only concern ourselves with the cost of gasoline. Most marine gas goes for more than gas station prices. It will cost approximately $15 a trip for fuel. That is a conservative figure. (Your average production model American-made boat is not designed to save fuel.) Add $2 for bait and $3 more for tackle (the $3 tackle cost does not include rods and reels, merely the everyday expendable gear such as lures) and this gives us a round figure of $20 a trip.

This figure will vary with the fisherman. Those who fish harder will spend more. Some anglers may buy a dozen clams for bait; while another will buy the whole bushel.

Most charter boats have a base price of $150 for a half-day trip and about $300 for an all-day. Add another $20 for gratuity. Most people share the trip and bring down the cost considerably. If he shares the boat with six friends, the cost is $28.33 a man.

Facts can be misleading. It is possible to spend more money on a day's charter than hereby stated. But then, the same rule applies to the private boat owner. I cannot account for individual taste and style. After all, some of us are quarter-pounder people. The point, I believe, is well made. To charter is a bargain and a carefree pleasure.

Although I am a charter boat captain, I did not exaggerate the rule of thumb cost projection to further any monetary gains; nor do I wish to discourage any boat sales that benefit a great many.

No, I did not forget the equity in owning a new boat. A well-maintained glass boat will hold its value over the years, if for no other reason except the spiraling cost of inflation. The replacement cost has risen. Don't forget interest payments on money borrowed, and sales tax.

Outboard operators get away cheaper, but not much. When it comes time for repairs and parts, you must go to the dealer. There is no price shopping for parts as in inboard engines, which are basically converted auto engines: parts for these engines are available at most auto parts stores. With an outboard, you must buy from the dealer and have him service it also. They are designed and engineered for professional service only. Just for the heck of it, price a power head for a 120 h.p. engine; then price the comparable part for a V8 inboard—a short block. The short block costs less money than the power head.

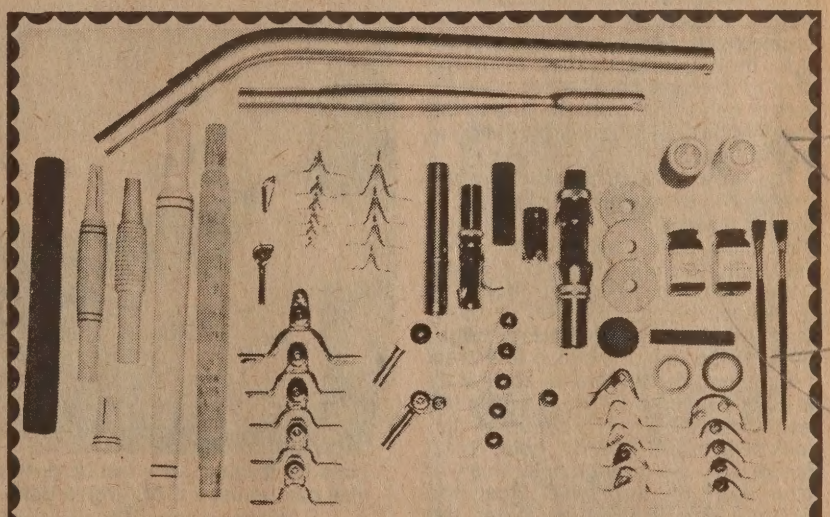
Outboard boats have the option to trailer. A trailer costs money. Some claim the trailered boat can take them where the action is. Maybe so. To me, it seems they fish the headlines and often arrive a day late.

The outboard craft is swift and easy to operate, but is pure punishment in poor weather. Many a well-planned day goes down the drain because of a small boat. A large vessel that offered protection would have made it through the day. A few small boat fishermen brave the tempest and take a pounding over and between the white water.

A pessimistic look at the future economy might suggest a reduction in the number of private boat owners. Maybe the small boat will remain an affordable pleasure. At the present cost structure of products, and the rise in living costs, I would say the large boat boom of the past twenty years has reached the limit of what's affordable to the middle class.

Even the professional charter boat operators are having a difficult time trying to make a good living in a price-inflated economy. The prices for a day's charter will also rise. Whatever, it will still remain a bargain compared to owning a private boat. Most skippers are in the business because they like it; they don't expect to get rich.

So take the bus and leave the driving to us.



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PLUG MAKING HOW TO:

THE PENCIL POPPER

by John Schauer

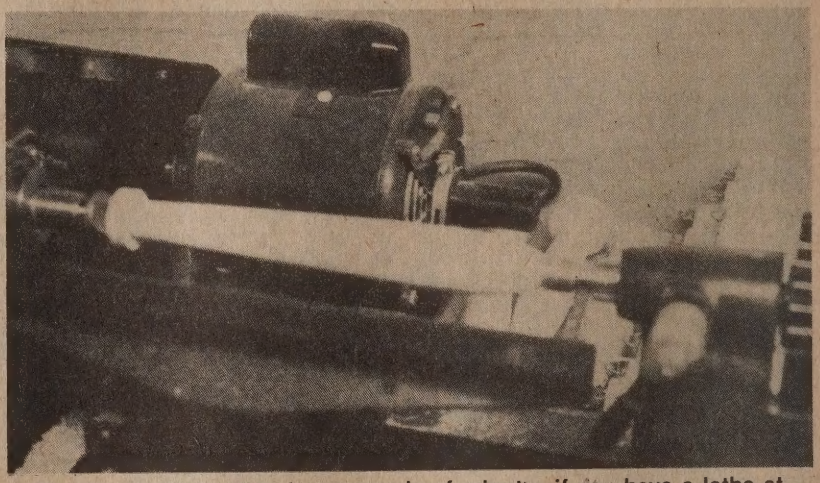
The Pencil Popper, like the Polaris, is another old standby used by casters. It, too, casts well and has the action to draw both blues and bass from down deep.

To make the lure, we need some sugar or clear pine. Since the thickest part of the plug is 1-1/8", you can also use dimension stock, which measures 1-1/8". This is usually clear or yellow pine. The length of the plug is 7-5/8" and weighs 2-3/4 oz.

Start with a 1-1/8" square piece of wood, 7-5/8" long. Make an X from the corners on the front and back of the piece of wood; this marks the centers so you can drill the through hole. If you are carving the plug, it would be better to drill the hole now because a vise can be used to hold the wood. If you are using a lathe, you can drill the through hole after the lure is shaped. I use a 1/8" aircraft drill bit which is twelve inches long. Once the plug is shaped, you have to cut the angled head. Make a line around the plug three-quarter inches from the front of the lure. Make a cut, using a hack or band saw, from the line to the edge of the face. This will give you the angled head.

To finish the face, take some heavy-grit sandpaper and wrap it around a one-inch dowel or broomstick. Now, sand back and forth with the angle; this will give you a curved rather than a scooped face. Make the curve about an eighth of an inch deep. Once the angled face is finished, sight along the bottom of the plug and draw a line along the bottom as accurately as possible. Measure 3-3/4" from the rear of the plug to the center of the hook hole. Drill a 3/8" hole, 1/8" deeper than the through hole; this will leave room for the swivel when the through wire is inserted. After the hook hole is drilled, you drill the rear lead hole. Take a quarter inch drill bit and very slowly and accurately drill a 3½" deep hole. All the holes are now drilled. Next, dip the plug in boiled linseed oil for forty-five seconds. Don't leave the plug in longer than forty-five seconds because the finish might not stick. Let dry for a few days.

When the lure is totally dry, get some 1/16" or 5/64" stainless wire, which can be bought at a local welding supply house by the pound. To shape the through wire, wrap one end around a quarter inch screwdriver blade, leave about one inch on the short end. Insert the wire into the face

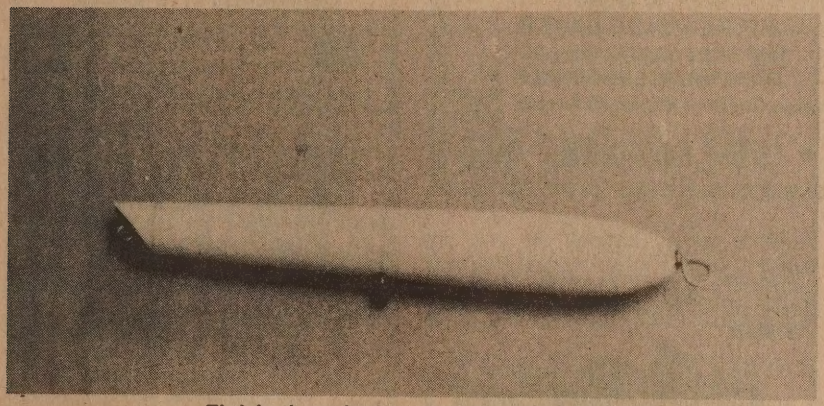


Shaping the body takes just a couple of minutes if you have a lathe at your disposal.

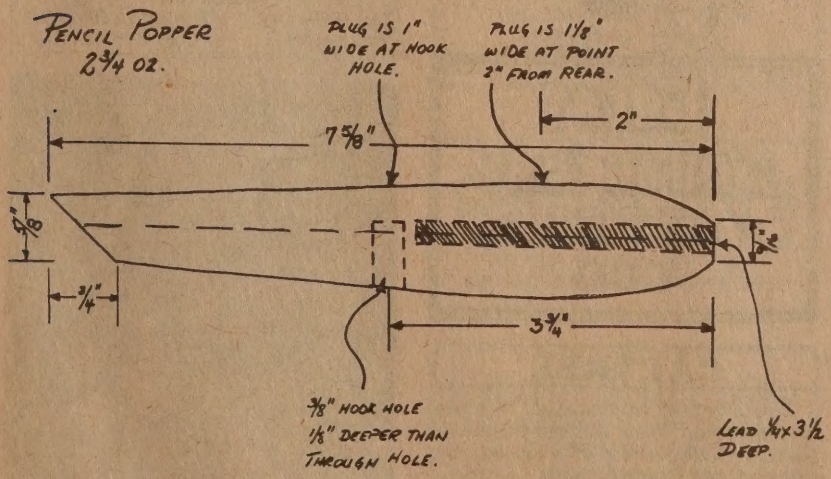
Hole for through-wire can be drilled by hand after the plug is shaped. A vise can be used if drilling is done before shaping the plug's body.

Angled face of plug is cut with either a band or hack saw.

Sandpaper wrapped around a dowel and worked back and forth accounts for curved face.



Finished product ready for paint and hooks.



of the plug, picking up a 2/0 barrel swivel along the way. Let about three inches stick out of the plug and cut off the excess. Now, melt some lead. When the lead is good and hot, pour it down the weight hole, filling the hole flush with the back of the plug. I use a small ladle that is made for pouring bullet heads. If you have trouble with melted lead running into the through hole, stuff a piece of excess stainless wire into the through hole. Doing this stops the lead from seeping out. Let the lead cool, then bend the through wire into the shape of an eye. Cut off any excess. Now, hang your hooks using 2/0 or 3/0 triple strength Mustad treble hook pattern 35504. Put some bucktail or synthetic hair on the tail hook. You can paint the plug your favorite color, using a good enamel or epoxy paint.

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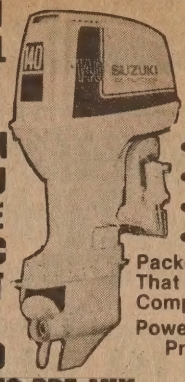

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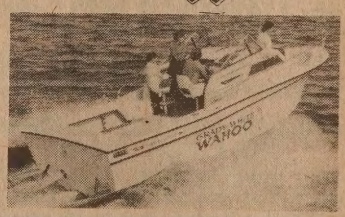

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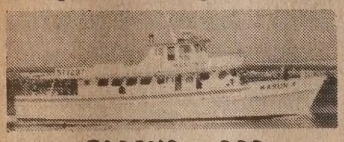

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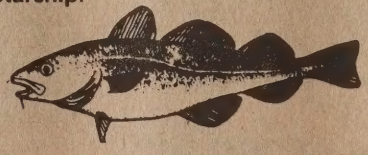
MONTAUK ★ BEST BET ★ COD

Capt Paul Forsberg of the **Viking Fleet** called to say that he sailed his full winter schedule this week consisting of Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday with very good catches of cod for passengers that dressed warmly and came on out. With the heated fishing rail making things a lot more comfortable, Wednesday's trip saw 6 passengers take 80 good cod up to 23 lbs. at Cartwright. Saturday's fishing was slow due to unusual tidal conditions, but bounced back on Sunday with 25 men bagging 71 cod up to 25 lbs. Most fish were in the 8 to 12 lb. range and again action was at Cartwright. Paul says it was a bail job for the first hour. He advises that people coming out to fish with him call the night before to find out what the weather forecast is for the next day. All this Montauk action was aboard the **Viking Star**. Capt Paul Forsberg, Sr. with the **Viking Starship** in Key West, Florida, has been having super reef bottom fishing on the dry tortogas bank. Only one anglers name was available. Mr. Nat Siegel who bagged up with over 20 muttons all by himself. If you are going to be in Florida within the next month or so, don't miss out on one of these super trips aboard the **Viking Starship**.



GREAT SOUTH BAY ★ BEST BET ★ COD

CAPTREE

The only boat which sailed this past weekend from the park boat basin was Captain Speedy Hubert's **Speedy VI**, skipped by Captain Nick. Unfortunately, the codfishing, which had been consistently good whenever boats were able to sail, took a turn for the worse. While some fish were taken on Friday's trip, Saturday and Sunday were a disaster. The skipper feels that this week's moderating weather should give the fishing a boost as well as enable more boats to sail and cover a greater area in search of new bodies of fish.

This 9 lb. 13 oz. fluke was landed aboard the Captree open boat "Jib VI" by Lee Slosberg early last season.

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FREEPORT

Capt Al Lindroth of the **Capt Al** reports that despite this past week's

Hudson Anglers' Club member Larry Izzo with 6 nice cod taken recently on open bottom south of Jones Inlet aboard the private boat Marimae. Subscriber photo.

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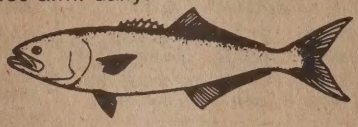
Bobby Reynolds displays the 15½ lb. blue he landed on the family boat off of Eaton's Neck last fall. Subscriber photo.

icecube type weather, he had good codfish catches early in the week. Later in the week and over the weekend gail force winds, plummeting temperatues and sea ice, resulted in such poor fishing conditions that Al was not able to fish the areas that he felt would be most productive. Al said that despite what you might hear or read elsewhere, his steel hulled vessel is able to get out everyday as long as there are enough people coming down. The steel hull breaks up the ice in Woodcleft Canal very easily so there is no problem of being iced in whatsoever. Sailing time is 5:30 a.m. daily.



Vinnie Gartmeyer took this 15 lb. 2 oz. fluke aboard the charter boat "Nostalgia II." It was taken at the Midway Rips.

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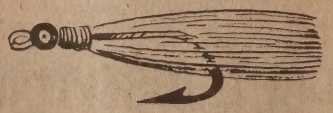

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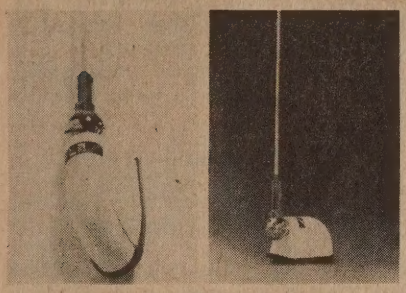

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A new AM/FM broadcast reception antenna that looks like a custom factory installation has been introduced by The Antenna Specialists Co., Cleveland, Ohio. The innovative new antenna, Model ASM-254, is designed for installation on virtually any deck or bridge surface. A major new design feature is the clean, contemporary styling and rugged construction of its high strength pure white plastic mount. Designed for installation on wood, fiberglass or aluminum surfaces, a heavily chrome plated swivel ball permits adjustment of the whip angle to a full 90°. The 33'' fiberglass whip is impervious to corrosion. Only two small holes are required to mount the ASM-254, which is supplied with twelve feet of cable and waterproofing gasket. Suggested list price is $32.95. For further information contact: The Antenna Specialists Co., 12435 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44106.

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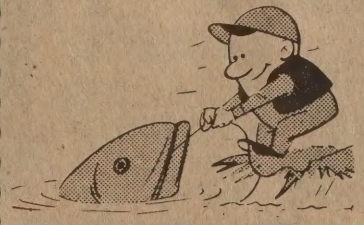

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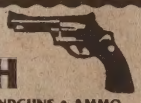
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Fourteen-year-old Anthony Testa with his first striper. The 10 lber. was taken aboard The Angler on the Tin Can Grounds back in late November. Subscriber photo.

construction with molded lip design is the fisherman's assurance of a true deep-water runner.

Designed for casting or trolling, precision balancing allows the lure to run much like a gizzard shad. The 5/8 oz. Shad-Mann's heavy-duty treble hooks reliably hold during the stress of a long run, and Silver Shiner and Golden Shiner finishes provide a natural, realistic appearance.

For more info, contact Mann's Bait Company, Box 604, Eufaula, Alabama 36027.

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Magic Worm Bedding Company, Inc., introduced its "NEW" Flip-Top Bait Hut at the 1980 AFTMA Trade Show in St. Louis.

The 7" by 5" by 5¼" FLIP-TOP BAIT HUT is a dual cover bait box made from sturdy expanded polystrene. The permanently attached dual cover concept guarantees the fisherman that worms are always on top. When the worms burrow to the Hut's bottom, flip it over and there are the worms. The strong elastic cord has a double purpose. First, it holds the covers in either an open or closed position. Secondly, with the dished-out top in the covers, the cord acts as a carrying handle. The covers' extended edges makes opening the Hut very easy. The Hut comes complete with Magic Worm Bedding and instructions.

If you desire more information or materials on the Magic Flip-Top Bait Hut, contact Magic Worm Bedding Company, Inc., P.O. Box 38, Amherst Junction, Wisconsin 54407; (715) 824-3100.

BOATING COURSE

The Brooklyn Power Squadron is helping skippers and would-be skippers get an early start on the 1981 boating season.

The Squadron will conduct registration for a free course in small boat handling on Thursday, **February 5** at 7PM at St. Francis College, 180 Remsen Street, just half a block from the Brooklyn Borough Hall. Both men and women over age of 16 are invited to attend the 12-week course. Ownership of a boat is not required.

Classes will be held at St. Francis on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., starting on February 12. The classes cover the techniques of safe handling of outboard and inboard craft, anchoring, tying basic knots, reading charts and plotting courses, use of a mariner's compass, and safety afloat.

The efficient use of power boats for maximum gas mileage will be described. Aids to navigation, such as buoys and radio beacons, are explained in illustrated lectures. And the basic rules of the road for safe operation also are taught to students.

The Brooklyn Power Squadron, a unit of the U.S. Power Squadrons, conducts the classes without charge to teach those interested in boating the skills they must possess for safety on the water. Additional information can be obtained by calling 768-4714.

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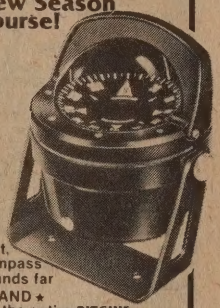

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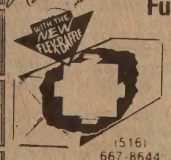

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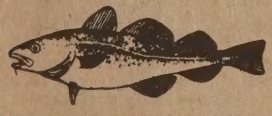

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TOO GOOD TO MISS

(Continued form page 19.)

of winter and its inherent inactivity, none but a handful have even seen whiting firsthand—let alone enjoy the dual pleasure of both catching and eating these fish. A scan through the pages of The Fisherman, or area newspapers will give those interested the names and telephone numbers of the vessels sailing each day for whiting and ling. Another noteworthy feature of the party boats from the Metropolitan Area, is that a good number offer night trips for those encumbered by jobs that prohibit most daytime fishing. I have yet to go on one of these sunless junkets, but I have been told again and again how much better these little battlers hit at night. It would stand to reason to me that such is the case, for as a youngster I would regularly catch whiting from Rye Beach on moonlit nights in the dead of winter, yet go fishless under the guide of sunlight. I am told the crowds are minimal on the night journeys, which in itself is enticement enough for me. Considering a cost of usually less than $20, tackle available to rent on board (no need to haul an arsenal from your home), heated rails and cabin, various hot and cold foods, the always possible chance of hitting on the pool, the fantastic eating to be enjoyed for months to come (these are some of the most reliable trips the party boats make and nearly everyone gets in on the action), the amiable crew, and the time of year (usually one of inactivity), one can hardly afford to let a winter dissipate without jumping in on this particular "winter bandwagon!"

This piece certainly doesn't mark the first time some copy on frostfishing in the New York Bight has graced the pages of this barnacled tabloid. Actually the basics of this article are a repetition of sorts or a conglomerate of the many fine pieces written these past few years by such notables as Tim Coleman (Editor of The New England Fisherman), and local favorite Matt Ahern. Matt has blanketed the how-to aspects of this fishery and Tim gave an accounting of his experiences aboard the old Klondike VI several years ago.

The fishing for whiting and ling stretches from December to April most years off the New York City coastline, and even the less adventurous souls can get out for some very comfortable spring outings. There is no finer way to initiate a new season than by taking some catches of these tasty cold water gamesters. The flounder has traditionally been the vanguard of each season, but the intrepid souls can certainly make a strong case for the frostfish.

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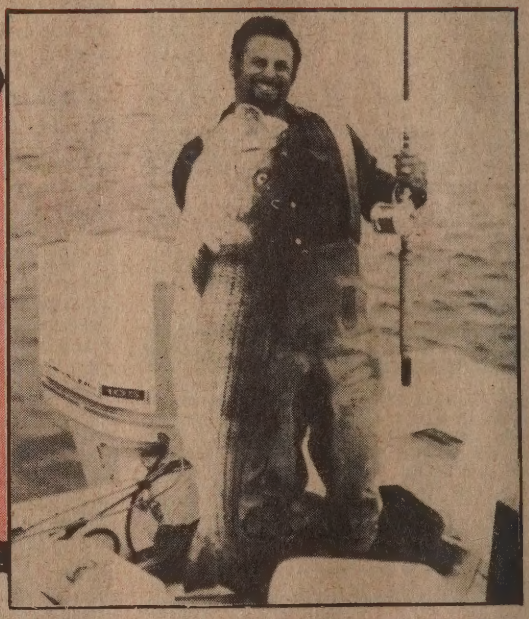

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